

The Magic of Life

by BROKEN EAGLE FEATHER

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Robert Monroe's excursions into different levels of reality began in 1958. A successful business executive (having been a radio and television producer, a radio station owner, and a vice president of the Mutual Broadcasting System), he was caught off-guard by the initial occurrences that led to full-scale out-of-body experiences (OBEs). After experimenting with audio signals in order to develop his concentration, Monroe, now 68, was "seized with a severe, iron-hand cramp" in his midsection. Later, vibrations racked his body, leaving him powerless to move. But with time, the vibrations slowed and he eventually accepted them as commonplace. Months later, however, after gaining the ability to control the vibrations, he gradually developed control of his "second body." As a result, he ventured into dimensions he simply labelled Locale I, II and III, which represented our physical existence ("local traffic," as he humorously refers to it), dimen-

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sions of different energy systems beyond time and space, and a land similar to Earth but with a different technology.

One trigger for OBEs, Monroe found, was to imagine how nice it would be to fly. He also enhanced the process by sleeping three or four hour and a half cycles. Then, by gently rolling over and out, separation of his consciousness from his physical body would occur.

About eight years ago, Monroe began to view his OBEs as a limited faculty. Rather than continue in this direction, he turned his investigations over to his “total Self.” The resulting experiences were of such a nature that he has no words to express most of those experiences. Indeed, he says his biggest problem in the ensuing years has been trying to find adequate words with which to fill *Far Journeys*, a book he planned to have published by the end of 1984. *Far Journeys*, he says, will offer a glimpse into those experiences which have dwarfed his OBE achievements.

In addition to his books (which he offers as a way to help others learn from his experiences, and thereby possibly avoid his mistakes), Monroe has developed a means of using audio signals to create windows or gaps into various levels or states of consciousness. Hemi-Sync, short for hemispheric synchronization, meshes and balances the electrical activity of the right and left hemispheres of the brain.

In recent years, research conducted by several scientists (Roger Sperry and Robert Ornstein, for example) has led to the popularization of brain functions. In short, the right side of the brain is thought to perceive in a holistic, spatial, intuitive and symbolically oriented manner. In contrast, the left side of the brain processes information in a linear, sequential and analytical manner.

Hemi-Sync, founded on a frequency-following response (FFR) principle, synchronizes both sides of the brain, resulting in uniform electrical patterns as measured by an electroencephalograph (EEG). The FFR, for which Monroe received a generic patent in 1975, holds that audio stimuli or signals evoke a brain-wave response. That is, specific physiological and mental states are secured or enhanced by specific sound patterns. To sustain these states, differential frequencies are used to establish “binaural beats.”

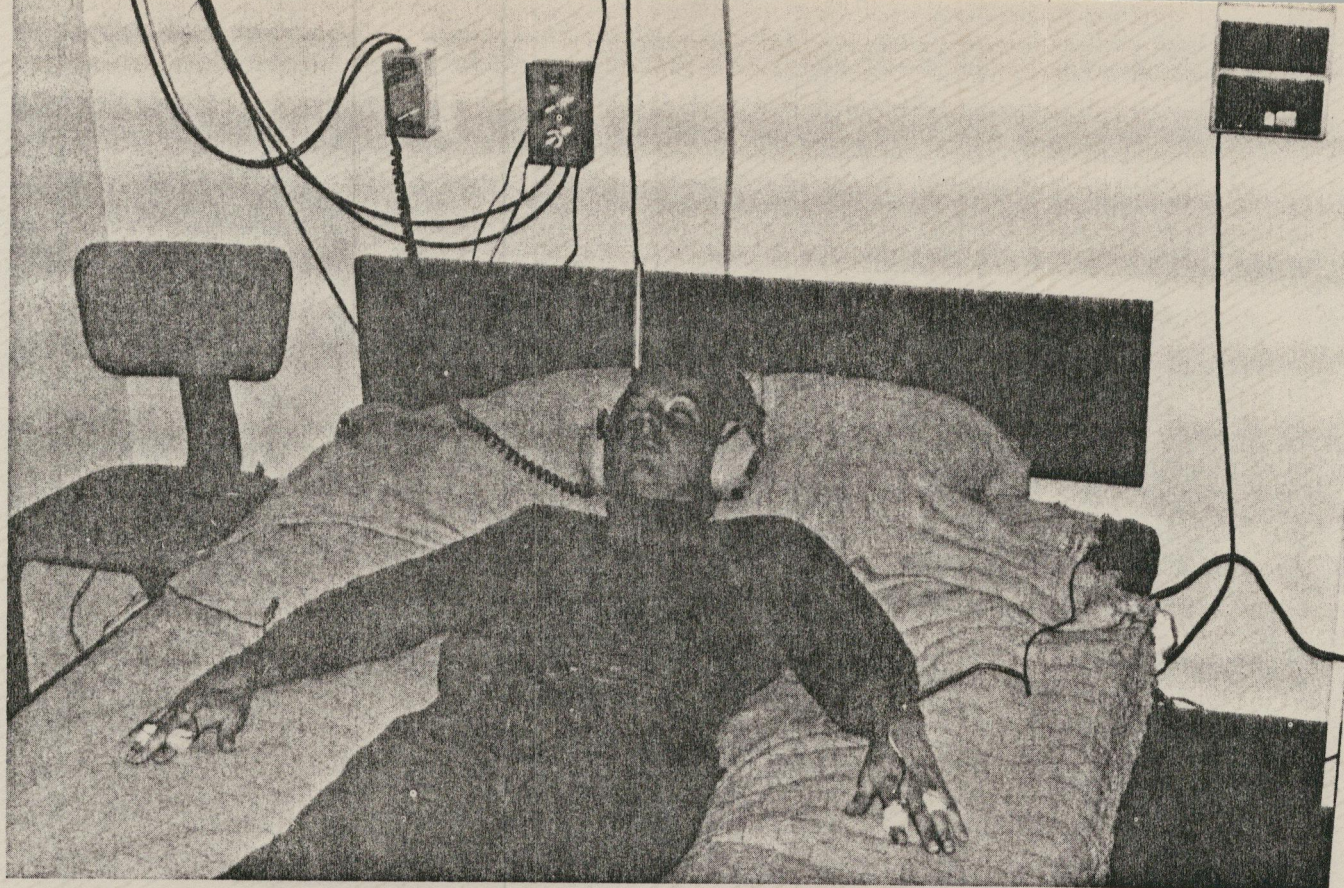
According to a September 1973 *Scientific American*

article, “Auditory Beats in the Brain,” by Gerald Oster, binaural beats were discovered by German researcher, H.W. Dove in 1915. As the term suggests, two (bi) audio (aural) frequencies or signals are used. For example, if a 500 hertz (cycles per second) tone is placed in one ear and a 505 hertz tone is placed in the other ear, the brain mixes them and produces its own 5 hertz signal. This 5 hertz signal is the binaural beat. A steady binaural beat will hold brain-wave activity in a steady state. In other words, a binaural beat sustains an FFR that will be synchronous in amplitude and frequency between both sides of the brain. Consequently, the threshold to other aspects of consciousness may be brought to the forefront of awareness.

Monroe uses as many as 12 frequencies ranging from 15 to 3,800 hertz, thus establishing as many as six binaural beat frequencies. These signals are often harsh and grating; therefore, the signals are masked by noise or other sounds. Over 10 years of measuring and monitoring pulse and EEG traces leads Monroe to know which buttons to push, as it were, to take one to the windows, or gateways, of various states of consciousness. In effect, through Hemi-Sync, he induces states of consciousness different from our normal state. Hemi-Sync frequencies are then cast onto a variety of tapes that the Institute makes available to the public and tapes that are used for the Gateway experience.

The first evening of Gateway, the 14 participants (including myself) were greeted by Monroe. The first noticeable thing is his deep, tranquil, melodious voice. Then, too, his eyes reflect a strange peace. They seem to connect with his soul. He tells us the “patterns (on the Gateway tapes) are deliberately designed to make you stretch . . . to break down your parameters of what you believe in.” This, in turn, will “help you consider aspects of being, doing, thinking that you may never have considered.” He stresses the need for us to work. Our experiences will not simply be given.

Each evening Monroe met with our group to explore ideas and to answer any questions. The second evening, for instance, he told us that our “progress along the superhighway to maturity and wisdom (going interstate, he chuckles) is measured by how you handle the release



Explorers are made as comfortable as possible on a waterbed while being physiologically monitored. A microphone hangs near so the entire experience will be recorded.

of illusions." One set of illusions, he says, is men idolizing women, and women waiting for a mythical Prince Charming. Another is thinking that we require eight hours of sleep. He thinks 6.5 hours sleep a day is quite sufficient. Throughout the week, though, he challenged us not to believe what he said. "But," he added, "you do have to go out and find if it is right or wrong." He would give us tools with which to explore consciousness; however, what we learned would remain our responsibility, our authority. How we applied these tools, he said, rested solely upon our shoulders.

While we met with Monroe each evening, two facilitator-counselors, were responsible for ushering us through the program. One of our facilitators, Dr. Bill Schul, author of several books ranging from *How to be an Effective Group Leader* to *Pyramids and the Second Reality*, is a social psychologist who has served on the staff of the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kan. With Schul, psychotherapist Patricia Sable, our other facilitator, created an efficient blend of talent. Between them, they provided insight into the experience while offering assistance enabling an internalization of the process.

One of their first tasks was to collect all timepieces. We were now in Never-Never Land. And, through the ring of a bell, they disposed of our basic, time-oriented worries. We would be informed when it was time to eat, sleep or slide into our CHEC for another taped exercise.

A CHEC (Controlled Holistic Environmental Chamber)

enhances sleep and provides a suitable place to listen to the Hemi-Sync tapes. The unit, which measures about 3 by 7 feet, has a panel on one wall to aid control of the individual environment. We could vary the color (red, blue, yellow and white) and the intensity of the lighting, for example. Or, we could control the volume of overhead stereo speakers. Stereo headphones, the principal means of listening to the taped exercises, also plug into this panel.

Furthermore, each CHEC provides isolation from external noise. And, since darkness promotes the perception of binaural beat frequencies, a weighted, crushed velvet curtain over the CHEC entrance allows one to block out external light. Fresh air is pumped into the units from overhead ducts. The units are even shielded to prevent interference from electromagnetic radiation. A coaxial cable, representing future Gateway developments, dangles from one wall.

Time seems suspended, even though hours are spent in the units. The timelessness serves notice that other levels of consciousness beyond our 3-D, time and space world are being tapped.

From one angle, Gateway represents different Focus levels. Focus 3, for instance, is basic Hemi-Sync. From here, other levels develop. Our first exercise involved "Resonant Tuning." What sounds like the overlapping and wavering drone of human voices signals this experience. We were to use the sound to find our individual resonant point, the point where we felt in tune with the

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environment. One participant (who requested anonymity), said afterward that she started vibrating and had a floating sensation. She said she couldn't adequately describe the experience because she had no reference point.

The next exercise took us to Focus 10, a state of mind awake-body asleep. (Monroe uses neutral terms, such as Focus, to avoid specific connotations other than being in focus at some level of awareness). During one Focus 10 tape where we examined aspects of our bodies, Otto Jehl, a manager for a large computer company, reported he was able to rid himself of his day-long headache.

In Focus 12, we developed problem solving abilities. Responses, or solutions to our problems, often manifested as visions and feelings. This, perhaps, was our first solid encounter with one of Monroe's basic teachings: the use of nonverbal communication. After one Focus 12 exercise, Dave, an architect living in nearby Charlottesville, Va., said he had had an "incredible experience," and

found that term lacking. Rushes of energy carrying information as to how to confront his fears and how to become more emotionally grounded swept through him. In addition, Evelyn Andrews, a pastoral psychotherapist from Hartford, Conn., told of having a vision where she saw debris from a bomb explosion. The vision suggested war. Through this experience, she learned of a subtle war within herself. She then realized the need to let herself go, and enjoy her feelings to a greater extent.

After we traveled to Focus 15, a dimension of no time, Harold Wessbecher, a German architect turned professional psychic and healer, related an experience of an alteration in his perception that embraced simultaneous time. During the tape, he said, he perceived the past, present and future as occurring at once. Focus 15 also was used for an "Elation Earth" exercise where we envisioned traveling into space and then held the Earth and Moon in the palms of our hands. This exercise later developed into "Elation Solar System" and "Elation Galaxy." As Monroe had promised, we were being stretched.

Focus 21 took us to the edge of other energy systems. In Focus 21, Monroe further emphasized nonverbal communication, saying that we should feel the need for any particular answers rather than verbally asking for information. Accordingly, other intelligent dimensions of pure sound and color were reported. And as I previously wrote, I visited a luminous world of tall, rounded structures where the resident, nonphysical beings communicated through telepathy.

Afterward, Susanne Fuchs, a German architect (out of 14 people, four happened to be architects), said she had previously visited the states of consciousness embodied by Focuses 10, 12 and 15 during her regular meditation practices. Ms. Fuchs added that prior to Gateway she had also spontaneously found herself at levels comparable to Focus 21. She considered it "very exciting to see that you can reach those levels controlled."

Indeed, without exception, all participants regarded Gateway as a major event in their lives. Everyone considered the tools they had received to enable a significantly enhanced awareness of self and of others. In fact, the experience was so uplifting that I had difficulty in locating



Gateway facilitators (shown here are psychotherapist Patricia Sable and psychologist Bill Schul) conduct a debriefing after each tape or exercise.

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something where I could cast a wary eye. Even so, during an interview with Dr. Schul, who has been associated with the Institute for six years, I asked about faults in the program.

His first concern centered on follow-up procedures. While he pointed out that the Institute does try to keep track of its participants, he suggested the pursuit may not be vigorous enough to enable a wider scope as to how Gateway affected people. He also readily acknowledged that verification of the experiences for consensual validation often seemed elusive. That is, most experiences (particularly regarding OBEs), he said, involved personal affirmations rather than objective validations. (This is not to say personal, affirming experiences are not available. The extent of application, however, widens if a consensus is achieved.)

Schul then mentioned the possibility of one's time at Gateway developing into a time of "some pretty intense personal experiences." While the Institute conducts preliminary screening procedures, the possibility exists (even though quite remote, he says) of someone having traumatic situations surface. Personal relationships that may have been deeply buried and not adequately dealt with, for example, may rise and demand resolution.

Continuing, Schul related the experience of a man who had a full-blown mystical rapture while at Gateway. He told how the man "felt himself totally bathed in white light." The man "went into a cosmic ecstasy that was unbelievable." However, as sort of a cosmic pratfall, the man fell off the seven-foot-high back porch. But the man escaped any injury and hadn't even realized he had fallen, says Schul.

However off-beat any information from, or experience of, Gateway participants seems, it is all considered for possible inclusion on the Gateway process, says Monroe. Stemming from the original M-5000 Research Project, our group underwent a Mark V Gateway. Mark V had been developed by collating over 90,000 Hemi-Sync tests and over 3,000 test exercises by nearly 2,000 people. And this, says Monroe, only includes tests under the Institutes's control. It doesn't account for the thousands of Hemi-Sync tapes sold to the general public.

Moreover, plans for Mark VI Gateway are now in the works. For instance, Mark VI will use a television monitor (attached to the now dangling cable) in the CHECs to aid

visualization of colors and symbols, thereby increasing the efficiency of nonverbal communication. (My Gateway roommate had immense trouble visualizing color during the exercises. He eventually learned to use black and white symbols.) Furthermore, says Monroe, transducers (an electrical device that converts energy from one form to another) will translate sound into color and shapes.

This constant drive for development surfaces in all phases of the Institute, which first originated from personal need. Some 20 years ago, Monroe says he ran out of options. He had exhausted all scientific and psychic models of reality in an attempt to account for his experiences. As a result, a loose-knit group of people came together in Westchester City, N.Y., to explore possibilities relating to consciousness. This work formalized into the Institute in 1971. In August 1979, the Institute moved to its present location on 800 acres of lush farm and woodland.

Fundamentally, the Institute is divided into Education and Research departments. Gateway programs and the availability of tapes to the public are the primary Educational aspects. And, while research is a cross-current within the Institute, the Research department conducts explorations from the quite unusual to the more earthly.

On one end of this spectrum, Dave Wallis, a former systems engineer for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, runs a newly remodeled laboratory. One facet of the lab is the Explorer program. Explorers consist of talented practitioners of out-of-the-body states and other people trained by the Institute to reach other states of consciousness. They roam, ramble, romp and otherwise explore multitudinous dimensions of consciousness. Monroe gleans the theoretical material he uses to balance Gateway from Explorers as well as from personal experience. For instance, he readily discusses intelligent beings and life-forms on other planes of existence. In doing so, he prompts his listeners to re-examine their basic assumptions about reality.

Another phase of the lab includes physiological monitoring including galvanic skin responses (typically associated with lie detectors), electrocardiograms (to measure heart activity), and the previously mentioned EEGs. Computing and analyzing data also plays a vital role. Monroe, for example, says he plans to publish a profile of successful OBE practitioners by the end of 1984.

Dave Wallis, a former systems engineer for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, heads a remodeled lab designed to obtain information regarding altered states of consciousness.



One of the lab's goals, says Wallis, is to increase the attention of the scientific community. Even if they are not greeted with open arms, Wallis says the Institute wants to have its research examined and considered by others. In keeping with this, doctoral dissertation programs relating to altered states of consciousness research are being developed. To better prepare for this, the Institute is installing a full-immersion tank for sensory deprivation studies. Typically, a full-immersion tank resembles a large bath tub. A saline solution, such as Epsom salts, allows one to float in water kept at body temperature. A lid clamps down to keep out light. Warm, fresh air is quietly pumped inside. This creates an environment marked by a lack of physical sensations, where one might possibly perceive other aspects of awareness.

On the other end of the research spectrum, this department embraces the Professional Membership. This includes physicians, psychologists, teachers and scientists who apply techniques developed by the Institute in daily situations. Feedback from this research enables the Institute to issue bulletins from time to time.

One bulletin, for example, discussed the plight of a middle-aged woman suffering from severe pain resulting from a previous leg fracture. She secured relief, reported Dr. Stuart Tremlow, after using Hemi-Sync tapes. Another bulletin discussed the progress of an autistic child who was treated in conjunction with Hemi-Sync. Then, after hearing about other cases, I contacted a small group of teachers and a psychiatrist who apply Hemi-Sync as a tool in their professional lives.

Devon Edrington, a philosophy professor at Tacoma Community College in Tacoma, Wash., met Monroe in 1978 at a workshop the Institute sponsored. Edrington says he and Monroe quickly established a good professional relationship. At the time, Edrington had been experimenting with various methods to enhance learning—most of which left him dissatisfied. After the workshop, he decided to apply Hemi-Sync in an educational setting.

Accordingly, he taped a Hemi-Sync pattern under his cognitive material, under the information he wanted his students to learn. At the beginning of each tape, he also used an induction technique to promote relaxation. In one instance, Edrington, using volunteers, says he conducted a "carefully controlled study with two psychology classes." Bypassing statistical inferences for me, he said, "In ordinary language, the result was that people who used this method scored approximately one letter grade higher than students not using it."

About two years ago, he met JoDee Owens, an elementary school teacher in the Tacoma School District. Ms. Owens became fascinated by Edrington's results. A teacher for 15 years, she began sporadically using Hemi-Sync in her first grade class. For practical reasons, headphones could not be used, so she broadcast a basic Hemi-Sync signal over stereo speakers, masking it with easy-listening music. At first, Edrington expressed reticence because he thought Hemi-Sync's efficiency directly correlated with the use of headphones. Through this

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experience, however, he learned that while less effective than with headphones, Ms. Owens' method proved "very effective."

At the beginning of the 1983 school year, Ms. Owens began using Hemi-Sync regularly. Within two months, she found the majority of her students writing as though they completed one year's schooling. "My students can write complete thoughts and paragraphs after six to eight weeks," she says. Edrington says this success is the result of "diminishing the fragmentation of their attention." Indeed, Ms. Owens adds that her method relaxes her students and "mellows them out." She also says her students can work independently and for long periods of time. To be able to do this, says Ms. Owens, attention is crucial. And, she continues, "the greatest problem in education is the ability of the learner to pay attention."

Ms. Owens' principal, Emma Sneed, referring to Ms. Owens, told me she "observed a teacher who really seemed to be motivating the students; the students were enjoying the activities in the classroom. Their listening skills were being developed quite well." A teacher for 20 years, and an administrator for two years, Ms. Sneed said, "Based on my experience, I could see that what these students were able to do was at an accelerated level."

I then talked with Dr. Paul Travis, a Washington, D.C. psychiatrist. One of his patients, a Vietnam veteran suffering from delayed stress, had a "fairly severe problem with agoraphobia." (Agoraphobia is the dread or fear of open spaces.) Using a basic Hemi-Sync tape as part of the treatment, Travis said he found the tape offered a "fairly dramatic ability to decrease anxiety using the relaxation response with it." This treatment has allowed the patient to venture farther and farther from home and, says Travis, "is doing very well now." In fact, the patient seems "to have made almost complete recovery right now where others (delayed stress patients not using Hemi-Sync) are not doing as well."

Travis also used Hemi-Sync in an HP-10, or high performance, treatment program for alcoholics. HP-10 involves a series of codes such as awake and alert, focusing on particulars, remembering, relaxing and speaking out. Each code corresponds with a specific Hemi-Sync signal. Again, says Travis, Hemi-Sync is part of an overall therapy but people using the tapes "have improved at a

greater rate than you would normally expect. One (patient) in particular, had marked improvement in self-concept very rapidly."

A few of my fellow Gateway participants also sought application of Hemi-Sync. Sidney Tate, director of Human Resources for the First Union National Bank in Charlotte, N.C., for example, attended Gateway to determine if Hemi-Sync could be used at his bank. By the end of Gateway, Tate thought a basic Hemi-Sync signal might aid the performance of computer keyboard operators. The bank already had an extensive incentive program, said Tate, and he felt Hemi-Sync might further contribute. Another participant was Darlene Miller, director of Lookout Mountain School in Golden, Colo. Her school is a treatment facility for juvenile violence and sex offenders, and she said she may institute Hemi-Sync as part of their overall treatment.

Through Hemi-Sync, Monroe had told us, one may get in touch with an all-encompassing energy. He hesitates to give this energy a name, even though he says people have been dealing with it throughout history. "Yet, we have no instruments to measure this energy, all we can do is perceive it," he says. And, by perceiving it, it seems to me, humans might well be able to embark on greater avenues of self-development. During one October week this became obvious to 14 Gateway participants.

Hemi-Sync, itself, simply represents a tool with which to perceive these greater energies. But through Monroe's research, Hemi-Sync reflects a melding of science and technology, resulting in a special magic: a magic that holds promises of unlocking doors leading to vast potentials in and of human awareness.

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